

Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee **Meeting Minutes**

December 1, 2011 • Department of Public Works • Conference Room, 4:30PM

Attending: Meg Vickery, Sue Morrello, Cristina Fernandes, John Root, Laurel Dickey, Susan Waite, Martha Hanner—Amherst League of Women Voters (LWV).

- Approval of November meeting minutes. Approved unanimously.
- America Recycles Day (Desired outcome- sharing of information): John took down the library display today. Susan's letter to the Bulletin's editor was published.
- Styrofoam Free (Desired outcome- Share background info, compile research on restaurant EPS use, devise next steps): Susan W. distributed written info about polystyrene. Discussion about the difference between expanded polystyrene and non-expanded polystyrene, and why certain municipalities ban the expanded type, but not the other (food use, not able to be recycled, take up more room in landfills, etc.). Cristina suggests that we gather a wide variety of possible food containers/ plastics to examine what is safe/"good" or not. Meg and Susan W. suggests that we could take sample containers to those businesses still using EPS as alternative possibilities and the list of reasons to avoid EPS. John points out that we would need to actually meet with the person who makes buying decisions (business owner/manager). Meg notes that we could make both the "green" argument, and the practical one (that the landfills are closing). Having the endorsement of the LWV would be helpful. Martha suggests that we attend something like a brown bag lunch with the LWV to share information (Martha will bring the idea to the LWV board). A press release could be created. Sue M. talked with the interfaith council, but they are only loosely affiliated at this point. Different approaches for different vendors would be useful. Possible organizations who would support this effort – LWV, Hitchcock Center, Amherst Board of Health, MASPRG/Clean Water Action, Amherst Sustainability Coordinator (Stephanie Ciccarello), Amherst High School Environmental Club. Could advertise in the paper to praise those who are not using foam and a list of alternatives. All info created should be concise and simple. Still potentially heading towards a ban, but using education first.

Next steps:

Gathering of plastic containers to examine at a RRMC meeting.

Info packet/materials for examination at next meeting.

Brown bag lunch with LWV.

Newspaper ad praising businesses that do not use EPS.

- Facility tours (MRF & COVANTA)
All need to respond to Sue. M's "Doodle". Sue W. will send email about Covanta visit possibilities.
- New Business
 - All Best Buy stores now take computer peripherals and anything with a screen (cell phones and electronics) from the public for disposal for free—whether or not they were purchased at the store. They use certified electronics recyclers.

They also take used CDs and DVD and probably send them to TechnoTrash.
Sue will investigate whether it makes sense to advertise this at the landfill.

- Sue Cairn has been contacted by the Town Manager's Office for an interview. Laurel will talk with Sue at work.
- The transfer station has received up to \$7500 from a grant from the state DEP to purchase a mattress roll-off to replace the leaking one at the transfer station. We need to find someone who will recycle the mattresses.
- John would like to have a discussion of pay-as-you-throw and zero waste movement next month.
- Discussions have started about next year's sustainability festival (April 2012). What does the committee want to do this year?

Action Items:

- Susan will bring examples of all resins used in plastics categorization to next meeting.
- All members will bring examples of disposable food containers to sort and classify at next meeting.
- All will respond to Sue M.'s Doodle and Susan W. email about tours.
- Susan W. will let Martha know when the tours are.